

# Endurance in Trial Ensures The Crown Will Be Yours For He Has Promised

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 04 July 2024

Preacher: Malcolm Macdonald

- [ 0 : 00 ] I'm going to sing now to God's praise from Psalm 94. Psalm 94 from verse 9. The Lord did plant the ear of man, and here then shall not he.
- He only formed the eye, and then shall he not clearly see. He that the nations doth correct, shall he not chastise you?
- He knowledge unto man doth teach, and shall himself not know. Man's thoughts to be but vanity the Lord doth well discern.
- Blessed is the man thou chastenest, Lord, and makes thy law to learn, that thou mayst give him rest from days of sad adversity, until the pit be digged for those that work in equity.
- For sure the Lord will not cast off those that his people be, neither his own inheritance quit and forsake will he.
- [ 1 : 05 ] But judgment unto righteousness shall yet return again, and all shall follow after it that thou art right-hearted men.
- Let us sing these verses, Psalm 94 from verse 9 to 15. The Lord did plant the ear of man, and here then shall not he.
- The Lord did plant the ear of man, and here then shall not he.
- He only formed the eye of man, and here then shall not clear his name.
- He that the ear of man, and here then shall not be. He that the ear of man, and here then shall not be. He that the ear of man, and here then shall not be.
- [ 2 : 20 ] He the ear of man, and here then shall not be. He that the ear of man, and here then shall not be. He leads me to magic.
- He leads me to magic. not known. Man's thought to leave a vanity.
- The Lord will be discern. Blessed is the man of business Lord can give thy love to learn that thou mayst give rest from this hope shall be until the day be king for those that were in liquid king.
- For should the Lord will not cast all those that is give a be neither his own inheritance quinton quittidental quitt thy forsake will be but judgment unto all ages quitts nd shall yet return again and God shall follow and get that right heart in shall we turn to the passage that we were reading together from the New Testament scriptures the epistle of James and the first chapter and we'll read verse 12

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him many of the commentators many of those who feel the call to expound the scriptures and bring their thoughts together with regard to the passages that they're commenting on are of the same mind with regard to this epistle of the epistle of James they call it a very practical book a very practical letter and you understand why that is the case some have considered to be a negative negative aspect of the construction of the book because he puts so much emphasis on what the believer must do rather than what is already done for the believer but the apostle is clearly someone who wants to move from what is theoretical and theological to experiential he wants the knowledge that he has to be shared amongst those who are willing to put that into practice in their lives as believers and in a sense that's what's most important whatever it is that we know that is knowledge that we derive from God if we're not willing to put that knowledge to a practical use then it doesn't accomplish what it is meant to do we need to live out the

[ 7 : 46 ] Christian life in a practical way fulfilled with knowledge that we have our calling to be lights and to be salt in the world so that's the design of the apostle and the opening verses of the epistle help us understand who this epistle is initially who the epistle is for initially it begins with the words James a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad greeting he's writing this epistle to the Lord's people he describes them as the twelve tribes scattered and that doesn't mean some have insisted that that means that the apostle is more interested in the Jewish believers more than he is in other believers

Gentile believers who have come to faith in a sense there is an emphasis placed on it on what is the diaspora those who have been driven from their homes and had to go elsewhere because of the persecution that they've endured but he's very much like the apostle Peter in the description that he gives to those who the letter is intended for and then we see he speaks of my brethren count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations he not only tells us who the epistle is for but what it is for and his primary desire is to encourage the Lord's people and maybe we could narrow the focus of the epistle to address it to those who are persecuted which the diaspora suggests but it's all kinds of experiences that the

Lord's people are called to endure it's much broader than that narrow focus and why we might look at the verse before us here we might think of temptation being simply the experience of a believer being encouraged to sin and that temptation is brought into their experience from as he goes on to say the source of it can be multifaceted but it is again it is something that we need to understand purely on the basis of what he says elsewhere in the epistle that his concern is that what he is interested in is the faith of the Lord's people being tested and tried in whatever way these trials and testings come into their experience so our focus this evening is on one verse in particular and we want to first of all describe or ascertain who he is writing to who he is interested in encouraging the people who are blessed secondly they are blessed because they are able to endure thirdly and because they are able to endure they receive the approval of God and fourthly the promise of God is fulfilled in their experience they are recipients of a reward that is uniquely theirs so four separate strands that we find brought together in the words of our text first of all there are people who are blessed now we know who they are because the apostle identifies them he speaks of them generally in verse one but specifically he addresses them as his brothers in the

Lord in verse 16 again he says do not err my beloved brethren brethren in the Lord they are as part of the Lord's family the Lord's people they have faith obviously that is true of them that must be true he's concerned about the trial of their faith so the letter is addressed to not just to any person but particularly the church of Christ those who have faith they are children of God recipients of the gift that God bestows on his own children uniquely and particularly and most importantly they are born again they have experienced the grace of God the spirit of God working in their lives and bringing them to a saving knowledge of who he is if you go on down to verse 18 of his own will begat he us with the word of truth that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures so there's various descriptions there that identify for us who the blessed are all of these things and more besides could be said often and I suppose in a sense if you go to the original

Greek the blessedness of which he speaks the word that he uses there in the original Greek it's the same word you find in Matthew 5 and Luke 6 when he talks to the sermon on the mount the Lord there speaks of God's people as blessed and that word blessed is the same word that James uses here and I think if you study the epistle of James what you'll find is that many who are familiar with what James has to say that they believe that he demonstrates an intimate and a personal knowledge of the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount and that he very very often refers almost word for word to what the Lord taught so that he has imbibed the truth that the

[ 15 : 15 ] Christ that was his saviour taught but also he sought to declare that truth to others so the blessedness of which he speaks of you some translations of the Bible will say this people are a happy people happy are those who mourn and so on now that the blessedness comes not from the actual temptations or testings they will experience them but it's how they deal with them that makes them blessed they deal with it with the help of God no doubt but it's because they are able to deal with it that makes them blessed there are many temptations in the world there are many trials that the world must endure but these in and of themselves do not make a person happy or blessed it is the fruit of the outcome of their dealings with these experiences as they engage with them that makes them blessed it and that's the second thing we have in this inversion blessed is the man that endureth temptation and I was interested in the various translations we have the various

Bibles we use in our readings ESV puts it like this blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial New King James blessed is the man who endures temptation the new English translation happy is the one who endures testing and they're all pretty similar in the way that they translate this opening part but the emphasis in the translation is that it describes to us the result of the test once it is fulfilled whatever the nature of the trial or testing is what it produces in the person experiencing that is the result of them persevering the result of them remaining constant in their faith to the one who is testing that faith and there is no description given to us of the actual temptation this is a general remark that applies to all of the experiences of trial and temptation when it comes their way and without specifying the nature of it it is common to all

Christians there is a way in which those who endure these temptations when they speak of them although they may differ there is a commonality about it because of the outcome that follows all believers no matter what it is that the believer has to encounter they will endure with God's help they will persevere now it's a complex thing I suppose there is no one better to describe to us the believers experience under temptation than the Old Testament Saint Job we know fairly well how much he had to endure as a

Saint of God he endured not just the loss of his home his wealth his family and his health all of these things adding up and his faith had to be sustained throughout all of these things and added to that equation where those who were his so called friends coming to encourage him and the comments they make sometimes show us the limited understanding that a person may have about what God is doing at one point Job was encouraged to believe to believe that there is a reason for his suffering and that reason is alleged to be found in what Job is in some way guilty of his sufferings are the consequence of his own misstates things that is the case in some places and some occasions in our lives sometimes we suffer grief and we suffer sorrow because we've done something wrong and because we've gone down a particular road that we should not that isn't always the case and it wasn't the case with

Job but as his friends suggested and he says in one of the passages in Job chapter 5 although affliction comes not forth of the dust neither does trouble spring out of the ground yet man is born into trouble as the sparks fly upward and Job was someone who discovered this to be true but it wasn't uniquely his experience it was common to all but he had to deal with it he had to rationalise in his own mind why these things were and what the outcome of them was going to be and without God's help that was not possible in the New Testament we have the experience of the early church in the book of Acts where the witnesses to

[ 21 : 57 ] Christ that those who brought testimony to Christ they suffered imprisonment they suffered flogging they suffered all kinds of mistreatment not because they deserved it there was nothing wrong in what they were doing and yet they suffered and I suppose it is natural for a person who goes through that kind of experience to try and understand why this suffering is part of that experience why are they forced to endure this if God is God and if God is in control and yet this is what they were able to say as God spoke to them in their experience just like James who begins this epistle with count it all joy he says if you are if you are forced to endure suffering count it all joy

Paul says I am filled with comfort I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation he didn't embrace these troubles he didn't embrace that suffering as if it was a delight to them only with God's help could he do that only with God's help could he actually understand there is something in this for me there is something in this that is to the good of my soul and that will strengthen my faith and I suppose every one of them can understand and every one of us should understand that however long lived we are in this world or however short our life is that at some point we will be forced to deal with griefs and sorrows and sadnesses that will be a temptation to us that will be a trial to us and what is a mystery is not the fact that they're there is that when we look around us that there are those who are walking with us in the way that have more than their fair share of it there seems to be an inequity about it there seems to be an imbalance in the way

God is meeting out the sufferings that are part and part of the life of the church but the truth is that where we can see suffering where we can see the testings and the trials that the faith of some has to undergo where we have to endure it ourselves we can say that it is common to all we can say that some of these that we have brought them on ourselves but we must always say that God always intends it for our good and God always will have the glory in what is accomplished by it and that is what the apostle seeks to emphasize when he brings the sufferings that the church have the temptations that the church is confronted with the testings that their faith has to deal with that he has this intention to teach them that in these things they are meant to learn and in these things they are meant for their good and that is why the words may seem to us to be all so at odds with the reality is but he says let patience have her perfect work that you may be perfect and entire wanting nothing and this is the whole outcome if you like of what he wants them to understand so the third thing we have here again

I can bring your attention to the various translations because there's a slight there's nothing it's just a difficulty in getting a precision with regard to what the apostle is saying because he is speaking about the trial when he is tried he says when they endure temptation and it's because they endure that they receive approval and we read again these versions that speak to it slightly differently more less universally the same in the first part of the text but in this part in the new king james he says when he has been approved from the greek which literally means having been approved so when he has been approved approved by virtue of undergoing this temptation and enduring this temptation not just that they went through it but that they have received

God's approval on their perseverance in the ESV having stood the test and in the new English translation when he has proven to be genuine in other words the emphasis in these translations is on the actual test resulting in corroboration of the genuineness of their faith that's the way that the translators in that instance emphasise the outcome the purposes for which the test is fulfilled it will yield this outcome now we have to remind ourselves again of what the apostle is intending to do through this practical epistle he is describing the practical reason for what

[ 28 : 51 ] God is doing and under underlining what it results in to be tried does not necessarily yield this fruit or this outcome to be tried is sometimes something that a person will find difficult to endure but with the Lord's direction with the Lord's light with the Lord's encouragement this fruit will come before them none of us would want it none of us would seek it none of us would be particularly happy without God's light on it the psalmist on occasion will say something like that they have to fly from the presence of God they have to distance themselves from what

God is doing because it is a grief to them it is a pain to them it is a sorrow to them but when God is intervening in this way with the light that he gives on what he is expecting to accomplish by it it makes the difference Mordoch Campbell in one of his books he is someone who is very interested in the experiences of God's people and he quite often refers to it and he is talking about the sorrows of the Lord's people when they have to wrestle with them when they have to come to some kind of understanding and he describes a person who was under such a grief stroke experience he was encountering a cross which he found difficult to bear so he went to the Lord and prayed to the Lord that the Lord would take that cross away from him and he said it was apparent to him when he got up from his knees that the

Lord was not going to answer his prayer he was praying for the cross to be taken away but he said that night he felt the presence of this person a young man he said next to him reading from God's word reading to him from God's word and the words that he read to him were an explanation of what the Lord was doing or not doing and to you he said it is given in the behalf of Christ not only to believe in him but to suffer for his sake and you might not think that is much of a comfort but it is recognizing that the Lord is in what you're going through that makes the difference and if your experience is such whatever it may be however dark it may be and you're not finding the Lord in it then it's no wonder that it's a grief to you it's no wonder that your sorrow is added to because you're looking for the Lord and you're not finding the Lord in that situation but when the

Lord describes himself to you as the one who is doing this with his his own purposes in view that's what makes it different one of the commentators makes this distinction between the suffering of an unbeliever when they are when they are experiencing the trial and the sufferings of a believer who is being tried the experiences may be the same but the unbeliever may well be able to suffer these experiences and they may well be forced to endure them but the believer suffers them and endures them but with a view to victory a view to these sufferings yielding for them and in them whatever it is that the Lord intends for them the unbeliever can't have that they will sometimes be made bitter by what they have to go through but there is no answer to them there is no knowledge that they have that will lessen their load unlike the believer who can with God's help come to a knowledge of that the final thing that we have here is this that the approval of God brings a promised reward blessed is the man that endures temptation for when he is tried he shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised the crown of life that the Lord has promised to them that love him a crown is promised and not just

I suppose many think of the victor's crown those who are combatants on the field of sport they will receive the victor's crown which was commonly a way of describing the victory of the believer but there is more to it than that as far as the apostle is concerned he understands that the victor's crown is the crown of life that God has prepared for him the commentator Robert Johnston speaks of the victor whose time on earth may be filled with sadness and always in the valley of the shadow but he says yonder there awaits the blessedness and the glory of the heavenly life a crown of princely dignity for they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by Jesus Christ that is the the thing that

[ 36 : 06 ] Paul comes to that's the thing that Peter comes to that's the thing that James comes to there is a crown Paul calls it a crown of righteousness Peter a crown of glory that does not fade even the Old Testament prophet Isaiah he calls it the crown of glory and a diadem of beauty but the Lord himself calls it a crown of life and this is the promise that is made to those who endure that God ensures that having experienced the griefs and the sadnesses that this world inevitably brings our ways that are testings and that are trials and that are often we conclude wrongly that they will be the death of us it's held over of course of course the Lord's people sometimes may have to enter into the experience of a martyr but there are trials and testings that are different to that it is for any and for all who love him and that's what the apostle says this crown of glory you remember how Paul speaks to in his epistle to

Timothy his second epistle he wants the believers there to understand that the Lord is true to his word and he is he is going to fulfill his promises to all who are those who love him those who serve him those who follow him and the the truth is the same whoever which one of the apostles speaks it remember Paul he says speaking of his own glimpse into the future I am now ready to be offered the time of my departure is at hand I have fought a good fight I have finished my course I have kept the faith then he says this henceforth there is laid out for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day and not to me only but unto all of them all them also that love his appearing that's his confidence to all those who love his appearing their focus their hope rests upon a promise made that will not be proven false and the apostle

James and all of the apostles are convinced of that we are often eyewitnesses to the sufferings of others it's easy for us to comment on them because they're not ours we may be remote from them we don't share them but we're puzzled by the outcome of them but not one of these saints of God who pass through the waters who are tried and tested by the ways of this world and all that that involves every one of them will emerge unscathed according to the promise of God and they will possess the fullness of that promise realised in their experience a crown of life whatever that means and all that it means and more besides that will be there and the thought that we need to have at the forefront of our mind is this the crown that awaits for me is this what the

Lord has made known to me that this is what awaits at the end of my course in this world but may God encourage us to reflect on that and be blessed to us these thoughts let us pray O Lord O God we acknowledge in your presence that there are many who are even tonight sorely tried by reason of their own personal experiences and have problems within their own lives problems that arise out of their physical health or the physical health of others some have to deal with grief and sorrow and sadness by reason of bereavement no one of us will escape that others have issues to do with their own standing love in in in Christ they fear that they are not as they ought to be that they are not where they should be and all of these things have in them the capacity to vex and to test and to try each one we pray that you would sustain all of your people throughout whatever comes their way that their eyes would always be directed to Christ and do not allow them to avert their gaze from him believing that the promises that he has made to his people would be theirs in possession forgive our sins we pray in Jesus name, Amen concluding Psalm 30 we'll sing this Psalm in Gaelic the last two verses of Psalm 30 we'll sing this Psalm 30 for em chapter 3

Thank you.

[ 43 : 31 ] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[ 46 : 01 ] Amen.